



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NIGERIAN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO IDENTITY THEFT

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Nigerian man pleaded guilty in federal court today to identity theft.

Soji A. Olowokandi, 25, a citizen of Nigeria and former resident of Moberly, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr., this morning to identity theft.

Olowokandi admitted that on May 7, 2003, he purchased a 1996 Chevrolet Blazer at the King Dodge dealership in St. Louis, Mo. To purchase the Blazer, Graves explained, **Olowokandi** portrayed himself with a stolen identity by using a fraudulent Ohio driver's license. **Olowokandi** filled out a credit application to finance the purchase of the Blazer using the name and Social Security number of another person, who had not given him authority to misuse his identification information in this way.

According to Graves, **Olowokandi** knew the identity information had been stolen from the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Columbia, Mo., by his girlfriend, who provided the information to **Olowokandi**.

Olowokandi acknowledged in today's plea agreement that his offense resulted in a loss of more than \$30,000 by his victim.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the original criminal complaint filed on Dec. 23, 2003, several employees of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has an office in Columbia, recently discovered that their identities (names, Social Security numbers and dates of birth) had been compromised. As a result, numerous credit card and cellular telephone applications had been submitted in their names. At least 14 NRCS employees assigned to Missouri have had unauthorized credit access and/or attempts made using their true names and corresponding Social Security numbers.

Under federal statutes, **Olowokandi** could be subject to a sentence of up to 15 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. His sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John E. Cowles. It was investigated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow